

Viewpoint: 5 reasons there's a 'civil war' brewing between organic food advocates

There's something of a civil war brewing in the organic movement. On one side are industry boosters boasting about how organic has gone mainstream. These folks are fine with a Big Ag version of organic agriculture—enormous monocrop fields and global distribution to every Walmart across the land. On the other side are purists who feel that the spirit of organic—building healthy soil, promoting biodiversity, focusing on small producers and distributing regionally—is no longer represented by the USDA certified organic label (hence the various alternative organic labels popping up).

The USDA certification has never explicitly required any of those things, however. Instead, organic rules focus primarily on substituting natural fertilizers and pest control methods for chemical ones. But even here things aren't quite as they seem.

Does Organic Mean Toxin-Free?

Not entirely. USDA standards allow the use of several dozen synthetic chemicals on certified organic farms [S]ome of the naturally derived substances permitted for use as pesticides are used in unnatural concentrations that make them highly toxic (to creatures such as bees, for example). Rotenone, a notoriously toxic but naturally derived pesticide, was on the list of permitted substances until last year.

Read full, original article: [Does Certified Organic Mean What We Think It Does?](#)